



Vol. 4. No. 3 October 2011

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### President's Message

As of October 31st, 2011 I will no longer be President of the Rocky Point Bird Observatory Society. I have received a great professional employment opportunity and feel that I cannot fulfill both the requirements and commitments of my new work responsibilities and those as RPBO President. I am honoured to have had the opportunity to work with you and RPBO over the last 6 months. I enjoyed my time as President, both the opportunities and experiences the position provided. The society has a great Board of Directors and many great members and volunteers. I am sad to say I did not manage to make it out to the field this summer and fall as much as I would have liked too and did not get chance to get to know many of volunteers and members. At this time a interim President has not yet been decided, however, the organization is in good hands and I am sure a replacement will be found and will continue to lead the organization until the March 2012 annual general meeting (AGM) when a new President will be elected.

*Shona L. Lawson*

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### Banding Station News



*A Wilson's Warbler ( Wilsonia pusilla ), just one of the many Wilson's Warblers banded each fall during the fall migration season (photo courtesy of Jessie Fanuchi).*

Our fall migration passerine banding season is almost over for another year. It was another successful year again, however, the numbers of birds this year have fallen short

when compared to 2010. The very late and cold spring coupled with inclement weather along the coast and other migration routes may have impacted migrating passerines this year but as not all the numbers are in yet it is still too soon to see if and what the impacts were and are to North American passerine populations. Thank you again to Brian Pomfret our Bander-In-Charge (BIC) and Emily Barnewell, RPBO Intern, and all the volunteers for your hard work - it is appreciated.

This year there were new processes in place regarding access to Rocky Point Bird Observatory's banding station on Department of National Defense lands. Thank you to all the volunteers, members and visitors who have been understanding and patient with RPBO as we navigated this new process. As this was a new process for both RPBO and DND things may evolve and change for next year. Please keep us in mind for next year and RPBO will keep our members and volunteers updated on our activities and volunteer opportunities in the future. RPBO really depends upon the work of volunteers and we look forward to accommodating and adding new and existing volunteers to our roster next year.

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### Notthern Saw-whet Owl Project News



*Just one of the many Northern Saw-whet Owls ( Aegolius acadicus) banded at Rocky Point during the 2011 NSWOW Project (Photo courtesy of Ann Nightingale).*

Optimism for this season's numbers were high when two Northern Saw-whet Owls hit the passerine migration nets in August. Based on our developing four-year cycle, (2011 is year 3 of the cycle), we anticipated a large number of captures, possibly as many as 700 this fall. Two test nights were conducted in early September to investigate the possibility of an early migration, but with only three owls banded each evening, things looked on track for a typical journey southward. The project started in earnest on September 15, and by September 25, 43 newly banded Saw-whets were continuing their travel. As we have found this year during passerine monitoring, the numbers are lower than expected. Or possibly, the birds are later than we anticipated. Our first Barred Owl of the season was captured and banded on September 25. Bander duties are being shared by volunteers Ann Nightingale, Rick Schortinghuis, Jessie Fanucchi and Colin Jennings. Although we had hoped to hire a paid bander-in-charge for 2011, our fundraising efforts fell short this

year and we were unable to do so. We'll make a more concerted effort for 2012! Be sure to check out the [Adopt an Owl](#) opportunity.

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### **International Northern Saw-whet Owl Project Under Development**

RPBO is delighted to be a partner in a developing Northern Saw-whet Owl project with [GreenWood Resources](#) in Boardman, Oregon. The property in Boardman is a tree farm, growing poplar primarily for use in the furniture industry. When rodents caused trouble with the irrigation lines, GWS opted for an environmentally sensitive solution and installed nest boxes for small raptors. They have had amazing success, with more than 60 owl nests in the boxes in 2011 alone. In 2012, RPBO, along with biologists and banders from Washington, Oregon, and California, will be banding the parents and nestlings, seeking to determine if there is any connectivity between the breeding populations in northern Oregon and transient populations in BC and Washington. Of course, we'll also be looking for previously banded birds in the nest-boxes! As the project develops, more research projects are likely to be identified. Thanks go out to Megan Nuss at GreenWood Resources for bringing their project to our attention!

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### **New RPBO Committees**

Fall has arrived and so has RPBO new committees. These communities have been formed to help with the various activities and operations of the society. This is a way for members, non-members, volunteers and the community to contribute and be involved in the organization in addition to the field season. The purpose of the committee(s) is to focus on a particular task or area, such as fundraising or events. Time commitments are expected to be minimal. For example we need volunteers for the 2012 International Migratory Bird Day and future Avian Colloquiums. If you are interested in being a committee member or chair contact RPBO Vice President Michael Simmons [committees@rpbo.org](mailto:committees@rpbo.org). For more information on committees, Terms of reference (including a list of committees) and the committee chair role please visit <http://rpbo.org/>.

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### **Education & Outreach**

#### **Bird BBQ**



*Pictures of the Bird BBQ RPBO Fundraiser (Photos courtesy of Emily Barnewall).*

RPBO continues to be an active participant in public education and outreach. October 1st and 2nd saw the second of what is turning into an annual educational and fundraising event the Bird BBQ! This included food, a slide show and an owl banding demonstration.

A big Thank You to Pedder Bay Marina [www.pedderbay.com](http://www.pedderbay.com) of the Oak Bay Marine Group for allowing RPBO to host this event at Pedder Bay Marina.



Bird BBQ Goodies - Owl Cupcakes (Photo courtesy of Emily Barnewall).

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### Gift Ideas from RPBO



Examples of Adoption certificates for Wilson's Warbler (\$20) and Steller's Jay (\$50)

Christmas is just around the corner are you looking for some new and interesting gift ideas? **Adopting a bird** from RPBO and/or buying **Rufous Hummingbird Cards** from the Hummingbird Project of BC make great gifts for family and friends. Children love to get interesting gifts and what better way to give a child a gift of nature and support RPBO than to adopt one of our banded birds? Check out RPBO's Adopt-A-Bird Program program. Adoptions range from \$20 - \$100. Funds go to help fund RPBO operational, stewardship and conservation activities. Visit the Rocky Point Bird Observatory website to adopt a bird online and learn more about the species <http://rpbo.org/>.

**Rufous Hummingbird Cards** are beautiful photos of a female and male Rufous Hummingbird, taken by Michael Yip, information about the species is provided on the back of the cards. Michael Yip, a local birder and photographer <http://www.vancouverislandbirds.com>, has kindly allowed the Hummingbird Project to use these photos for fundraising. The cost is **\$10 for 10 cards** (5 male, 5 female) plus shipping. Please contact the [hummingbird@rpbo.org](mailto:hummingbird@rpbo.org) if you are interested in purchasing these cards and supporting the Hummingbird Project of BC.



Rufous Hummingbirds  
*Selasphorus rufus*

The little male Rufous can be recognized by his shiny red throat and the constant buzz that accompanies his flight. Rufous hummingbirds are important pollinators. They transfer pollen from flower to flower as they collect their nectar reward from plants. Many animals in the ecosystem rely on the fruits of their pollination efforts. In summer, Rufous breed along the west coast and in the interior of BC, having travelled from wintering sites in Mexico and the US Gulf States. Unfortunately, the Rufous population is estimated to have declined by 63% in the last 40 years and they are now considered a species of continental concern. They are vulnerable to landscape and climate changes. These changes could eventually stop this important pollinator returning year after year.

Please consider planting hummingbird-friendly plants, and if you have a feeder, provide boiled nectar made from 1 part white sugar and 4 parts water. Other sugars can harm the birds. It is also important to keep the feeder clean. If you wouldn't drink it, then it is not good for hummingbirds either.

The Hummingbird Project of BC (HPBC) is a citizen science-based study dedicated to the conservation of hummingbird populations and their habitats throughout BC. HPBC is part of Rocky Point Bird Observatory, which is a volunteer-run charitable organization. To learn more about hummingbirds in BC, please visit our website at <http://rpbo.org> or email us at [hummingbird@rpbo.org](mailto:hummingbird@rpbo.org) photo kindly provided by Michael Vip in support of the Hummingbird Project at RPBO.

Photo kindly provided by Michael Vip in support of the Hummingbird Project at RPBO.



Rufous Hummingbirds  
*Selasphorus rufus*

The little female Rufous can be recognized by the small patch of shiny red feathers at her throat. Rufous hummingbirds are important pollinators. They transfer pollen from flower to flower as they collect their nectar reward from plants. Many animals in the ecosystem rely on the fruits of their pollination efforts. In summer, Rufous breed along the west coast and in the interior of BC, having travelled from wintering sites in Mexico and the US Gulf States. Unfortunately, the Rufous population is estimated to have declined by 63% in the last 40 years and they are now considered a species of continental concern. They are vulnerable to landscape and climate changes. These changes could eventually stop this important pollinator returning year after year.

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Photo kindly provided by Michael Vip in support of the Hummingbird Project at RPBO.



Support the Humminbird Project of BC buy purchasing these beautiful Rufous Hummingbird cards.

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## Chatter

Check out the Victoria Natural History Society's bi-monthly publication *The Naturalist Chatter* article for an update on the society's activities, events and a featured bird species each issue. RPBO has this space to share information about the society, our activities and bird species to a broad audience. The October/November issue features the Nothern Saw-whet Owl.



RPBO utilizes a clean energy system, solar panels and batteries, to power the banding station.

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## Your Membership is Important

With all of the energy put into volunteering at RPBO, it's easy to forget that we need to have society members as well, even if they can't make it out to the banding sites. It's not an onerous task--you can join from the comfort of your own home! The number of members can be a factor in receiving funding to continue our work. Please take a moment to [renew your membership](#) or [join for the first time](#). Membership in RPBO includes a membership in BC Nature.

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Regular Features  
Thanks For Your Support!

**Did you know that RPBO is a registered Canadian charity?** Donations made to support our projects are tax-deductible, but more importantly, allow us to continue and expand our projects. We are hoping to raise sufficient funds to be able to hire banders-in-charge for our Nocturnal Owl monitoring, as well as to offset some of the equipment and travel costs of the hummingbird project. There are a number of ways that you can contribute: directly from [our website](#), through [CanadaHelps.org](#), or by sending a donation to our mailing address. For those looking to leave a lasting legacy, we have an endowment fund set up with the [Victoria Foundation](#). You can even remember us in your will!

Thanks you to [Canadian Wildlife Service](#), [Environment Canada](#), [Victoria Natural History Society](#), [Pedder Bay Marina](#), [Kowa Optics](#) and many individual donors who provided financial contributions and/or services which make the 2011 season possible.

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### Hummingbird Project of BC News



The Hummingbird Project banding season is finished for another year. Keep updated and for more detailed information on the Hummingbird Project and news, and please see <http://rpbo.org/hummingbirds> or <http://rpbo.org/news>. If you are interested in participating in the Hummingbird Project of BC please send an email to [hummingbird@rpbo.org](mailto:hummingbird@rpbo.org).

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### Migration Monitoring News



*A Yellow Warbler ( *Dendroica petechia*), a common fall migrant banded at Rocky Point (Photo courtesy of Ann Nightingale).*

The fall passerine season is winding down thanks to all the volunteers who came out to both Rocky Point and Pedder Bay to make this season a success. Thank you to Emily Barnewell and many others for contributing and keeping us up-to-date on migration news through the RPBO Blog visit <http://rpbo.org>

A big **Thank You to Pedder Bay RV Resort & Marina**, a member in the Oak Bay Marine Group, staff and all the volunteers that helped setup and band migrating passerines at Pedder Bay between September 29th and October 6th. Rocky Point was closed during this time period for DND training/activities and Pedder Bay kindly allowed us to set up nets and conduct banding for these days on their property. RPBO would like to thank Pedder Bay RV Resort and Marina for allowing RPBO to continue operating the fall migration and population monitoring program during this time period.

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